Why does Manifestation take place at all?

Even if we forget the casual visitors who do come to visit Shri. Maharaj for a 'darshan', perhaps because someone in their group mentioned him and they had 'nothing better' to do and thought they might as well drop in and see what the whole thing was about, there are quite a few who are deeply interested in the subject about which Shri. Maharaj always talks. They have attended several sessions and honestly believe that they have a firm grasp on what Shri. Maharaj has so earnestly talked. Finally, they say perhaps in answer to a query from Shri Maharaj if they have understood ~~Shri Maharaj's teaching~~ what he has been trying to convey, they say: "Oh yes, Maharaj, I have indeed understood it. But I have only one last question." Shri Maharaj might answer: Why only one - ask two!

The last question often happens to be: "Maharaj, you have said that the Absolute - the Noumenon - is unaware of its awareness until consciousness begins to stir and the first thought 'I AM' arises - and then the wholeness is broken up into duality, and the manifestation of the entire universe takes place. My question is: why did the first thought arise and the manifestation take place at all?"

Shri. Maharaj would look at the questioner with an expression which indicates several reactions - a mixture of essentially great sympathy, appreciation of the questioner's sincerity, a certain amount of humour at his confidence with which he feels that he has understood the subject but most important a certain disappointment that he has not understood the point after all - as he himself had feared: another failure!

He would say, very softly: "I am afraid you have not really grasped what you have been hearing. You have been hearing, but not LISTENING. You have been hearing what I have been saying ~~not~~

as a number of little pieces, not listening to the whole; hearing words with the split-mind, not listening to the meaning with the whole mind; hearing as a separate hearer, not listening after integrating yourself with the Guru - and I do NOT mean the physical, individual Guru which you would have in mind. Otherwise this question would not have arisen. I am very ~~found~~ fond of this question actually, because it exposes the mind - or rather, the mind exposes itself.

"Consider. To whom did the question occur? Where did it occur? Did the question not occur to a 'you' who considers itself as an entity with an independent existence and did it not occur in consciousness? - i.e. there would be no entity - this supposed, this pseudo-entity - if there in the absence of 'consciousness'! and 'consciousness' is only a concept without any objective quality whatsoever, and, as such, without any phenomenal existence!!

"What we have arrived at so far is: in the absence of the sub-stratum of consciousness, there is no manifestation, and therefore, no separate pseudo-entities to ask any questions at all. and consciousness is only a concept. Do you wonder, then, that I call the entire manifestation the child of a barren woman?! In these circumstances, this-which-is, this-that-we-are - can it ever be understood by the split-mind of a pseudo-entity? Indeed, it is only when the entity disappears that the mystery dissolves, for the simple reason that the searcher IS what he is seeking!

"Your question, moreover, assumes that, basically, manifestation and its non-manifestation are two different 'things' but they are essentially the same state. When colored by a sense of BEING, it is consciousness in which manifestation appears, with its limitations; when colorless and limitless, it is the Absolute, unaware of its awareness. The phenomena are the mirroring of the Noumenon, they are not different. Noumenon is like (again a concept

in order to make communication possible) the one source of electricity passing through a number of 'exhibits' like lamps, fans, motors etc, or the one source of light reflected in a hundred mirrors - consciousness manifesting itself through millions of sentient forms.

"Now, do you see your question - why does manifestation take place at all - in perspective? A shadow wants to know 'why'? One of the characters played by a single actor taking the various roles in a one-man play - wants to know why? The answer could well be: Why Not?! Actually there could not be any question because there really is no questioner at all - except as a concept!!